HANDEL : AND : HAYDN SOCIETY

1850 1950

JONAS CHICKERING

CHICKERING CENTENNIAL PRESENTATION

of

"ELIJAH"

SUNDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 19, 1950 — 8:30

SYMPHONY HALL

BOSTON

COMMEMORATING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF JONAS CHICKERING AND HIS SONS, CHARLES FRANCIS CHICKERING, GEORGE H. CHICKERING AND THOMAS E. CHICKERING, TO THE ESTABLISHMENT AND SUSTAINING OF THE SOCIETY.

EXHIBITION

OF

CHICKERING HISTORICAL INSTRUMENTS

WE CORDIALLY INVITE YOU

TO SEE THIS DISPLAY

IN THE FIRST BALCONY FOYER

JONAS CHICKERING

1798–1853

(As he appeared when he sang with this Society)

Distinguished Citizen — Public Benefactor
Patron of the Arts
Builder of America's Oldest Piano. 1823

Founding Member of the Handel and Haydn Society, 1818

●

Woodcut adapted from an oil painting in the collection of
Chickering & Sons, 144 Boylston Street

The CHICKERINGS and the HANDEL AND HAYDN SOCIETY

The history of the Handel and Haydn Society is replete with evidences of the devoted interest and leadership of Jonas Chickering and his three sons. Indeed, their contributions to it were so varied and so substantial that the honored place which the Society holds as America's foremost oratorio group is as definitely a testimonial to their greatness as is the beloved piano which still bears their name.

Their active membership in the Society covered a period of seventy years, from October 4, 1818, when the father joined the group as a founding member until George H. Chickering relinquished the presidency in 1888. On many occasions, the four members of that illustrious family sang together in concerts.

Those were formative years, when many of the policies and standards which have made the Society great were established. In the forming of many of them, such as the restriction of membership to those possessing a voice meeting its exacting requirements, and the talent committee method of selection, one or more of these men played a leading role.

They were also trying years and on more than one occasion, as recorded in the history, it was the wise leadership, hard work and financial assistance of the Chickerings that helped the Society toward its ultimate destiny.

●

JONAS CHICKERING
Member 1818–1853
Trustee 1831–1834, Vice President 1835–1838
President 1843–1850

CHARLES FRANCIS CHICKERING
President 1856–1857

GEORGE H. CHICKERING
Trustee 1857–1858, Librarian 1863, 1865–1870
Vice President 1871–1886, President 1887

THOMAS E. CHICKERING
President 1858–1860

CHICKERING and "ELIJAH"

Jonas Chickering was a stalwart among that goodly company of great and gifted men of a century ago whose catholic tastes, initiative and sound judgment made Boston the center of the cultural arts which it remains today. The genius from New Hampshire who, in a land still not far removed from the provincial state, could build a piano that would delight the tone sensitive Franz Liszt and invent new techniques in pianomaking that old world craftsmen had not discovered since the days of Cristofori — and are still basic principles in the craft more than a hundred years later — was an artist in his own right and a savant whose interests were universal.

The story of how he met the great Felix Mendelssohn and, having himself become enraptured by "ELIJAH," brought it to America for all to enjoy is one of the legends in American music annals. Chickering went abroad in 1846 to confer with other pianomakers in Germany and England. Typical of his interest in music and in the Handel and Haydn Society, of which he was then president, he attended every recital and concert possible and was critically alert to what was both good and new. By intent, as well as good fortune, he was in the audience in Birmingham on the night of August 26th of that year, when Mendelssohn conducted the first performance in England of his monumental work "ELIJAH." Spellbound by its majestic beauty, he lost no time in seeking out the composer and making arrangements for bringing home with him the score and English text by William Bartholomew.

Thus it was with well earned but typically modest pride that the president of the Society sang at the American première of this world beloved oratorio at the Melodeon on February 13, 1848. It is a testimonial to Chickering's good judgment that "ELIJAH" remains one of the most popular works in the repertory of the Handel and Haydn Society a century later.

Without Jonas Chickering's alert interest and keen judgment, music lovers in America might have been denied the pleasure of hearing this great oratorio in their own country for a generation or more. For the composer had died at the height of his creative genius before the first American performance, and "ELIJAH" like many contemporary works might have remained in unpublished form for years.

Men like Jonas Chickering need no memorial for their works live after them. But tonight's performance is a singularly appropriate commemoration of the man who worked with heart and mind and voice and hands for the upbuilding of this Society. The score and text are the same as at that first performance. His voice is missing from the company, but the spirit of confidence and high purpose that he and his equally gifted sons infused into our organization still guides us.

HANDEL AND HAYDN SOCIETY

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1950-1951

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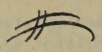


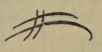
CONCERT 907

JAKOB LUDWIG FELIX MENDELSSOHN'S ORATORIO

ELIJAH

JONAS CHICKERING CENTENNIAL CONCERT

Symphony Hall
Sunday Evening, November 19th
at 8:30



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HAROLD HAUGH, *Tenor*

PAUL KING, *Bass*

ORCHESTRA OF 65 PLAYERS

JULIUS THEODOROWICZ, *Concert Master*

EARL WEIDNER, *Organist*

CHICKERING PIANOS *used exclusively by the* HANDEL AND HAYDN SOCIETY

JAKOB LUDWIG FELIX MENDELSSOHN

Born at Hamburg, February 3, 1809 Died at Leipsic, November 4, 1847

ELIJAH

ORATORIO. Opus 70. Produced at Birmingham under the composer's direction August 26, 1846. English version by William Bartholomew, adapted from the original arrangement in German of Scriptural texts. Sixty-sixth performance by the Society; first time February 13, 1848, at the Melodeon.

The Author of this English Version has endeavoured to render it as nearly in accordance with the Scriptural Texts as the Music to which it is adapted will admit: the references are therefore to be considered rather as authorities than quotations.

PART I.

INTRODUCTION.

Recitative.

Elijah.—As God the Lord of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.

OVERTURE.

Chorus.

The People.—Help, Lord! wilt Thou quite destroy us?

The harvest now is over, the summer days are gone, and yet no power cometh to help us! Will then the Lord be no more God in Zion?

Recitative Chorus.

The deeps afford no water; and the rivers are exhausted! The suckling's tongue now cleaveth for thirst to his mouth: the infant children ask for bread, and there is no one breaketh it to feed them!

Duet and Chorus.

The People.—Lord! bow thine ear to our prayer!

Duet.—Zion spreadeth her hands for aid; and there is neither help nor comfort.

Recitative.

Obadiah.—Ye people, rend your hearts, and not your garments, for your transgressions the Prophet Elijah hath sealed the heavens through the word of God. I therefore say to ye, Forsake your idols, return to God; for He is slow to anger, and merciful, and kind and gracious, and repenteth Him of the evil.

Aria.

"If with all your hearts ye truly seek me, ye shall ever surely find me." Thus saith our God. Oh! that I knew where I might find Him, that I might even come before His presence.

Chorus.

The People.—Yet doth the Lord see it not: He mocketh at us; His curse hath fallen down upon us; His wrath will pursue us, till He destroy us!

For He, the Lord our God, He is a jealous God; and He visiteth all the father's sins on the children to the third and fourth generation of them that hate Him. His mercies on thousands fall—fall on all them that love Him, and keep His commandments.

Recitative.

An Angel.—Elijah! get thee hence; depart, and turn thee eastward: thither hide thee by Cherith's brook. There shalt thou drink its waters; and the Lord thy God hath commanded the ravens to feed thee there: so do according unto His word.

Recitative.

An Angel.—Now Cherith's brook is dried up, Elijah arise and depart, and get thee to Zarephath; thither abide: for the Lord hath commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee. And the barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth.

Recitative and Aria.

The Widow.—What have I to do with thee. O man of God? art thou come to me, to call my sin unto remembrance?—to slay my son art thou come hither? Help me, man of God! my son is sick! and his sickness is so sore, that there is no breath left in him! I go mourning all the day long; I lie down and weep at night. See mine affliction. Be thou the orphan's helper!

Elijah.—Give me thy son. Turn unto her, O Lord my God; in mercy help this widow's son! For Thou art gracious, and full of compassion, and plenteous in mercy and truth. Lord, my God, O let the spirit of this child return, that he again may live!

The Widow.—Wilt thou show wonders to the dead? Shall the dead arise and praise thee?

Elijah.—Lord, my God, O let the spirit of this child return, that he again may live!

The Widow.—The Lord hath heard thy prayer, the soul of my son reviveth!

Elijah.—Now behold, thy son liveth!

The Widow.—Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that His word in thy mouth is the truth. What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits to me?

Both.—Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

O blessed are they who fear Him!

Chorus.

Blessed are the men who fear Him: they ever walk in the ways of peace. Through darkness riseth light to the upright. He is gracious, compassionate; He is righteous.

Recitative.—ELJAH, AHAB, and CHORUS.

Elijah.—As God the Lord of Sabaoth liveth, before whom I stand, three years this day fulfilled, I will show myself unto Ahab; and the Lord will then send rain again upon the earth.

Ahab.—Art thou Elijah? art thou he that troubleth Israel?

Chorus.—Thou art Elijah, he that troubleth Israel!

Elijah.—I never troubled Israel's peace: it is thou, Ahab, and all thy father's house. Ye have forsaken God's commands; and thou hast followed Baalim!

Now send and gather to me, the whole of Israel unto Mount Carmel: there summon the prophets of Baal, and also the prophets of the groves, who are feasted at Jezebel's table. Then we shall see whose God is the Lord.

Chorus.—And then we shall see whose God is God the Lord.

Elijah.—Rise then, ye priests of Baal: select and slay a bullock, and put no fire under it: uplift your voices, and call the god ye worship; and I then will call on the Lord Jehovah: and the God who by fire shall answer, let him be God.

Chorus.—Yea; and the God who by fire shall answer, let him be God.

Elijah.—Call first upon your god: your numbers are many: I, even I, only remain, one prophet of the Lord! Invoke your forest-gods and mountain-deities.

Chorus.

Priests of Baal.—Baal, we cry to thee! hear and answer us! Heed the sacrifice we offer! hear us! O hear us, Baal!

Hear, mighty god. Baal, O answer us! Let thy flames fall and extirpate the foe! O hear us, Baal!

Recitative.

Elijah.—Call him louder, for he is a god! He talketh; or he is pursuing; or he is in a journey; or, peradventure, he sleepeth; so awaken him: call him louder.

Chorus.

Priest of Baal.—Hear our cry, O Baal! now arise! wherefore slumber?

Recitative and Aria.

Elijah.—Call him louder! he heareth not. With knives and lancets cut yourselves after your manner: leap upon the altar ye have made: call him, and prophesy! Not a voice will answer you; none will listen, none heed you.

Chorus.

Priests of Baal.—Hear and answer, Baal! Mark! how the scorner derideth us! Hear and answer!

Recitative and Aria.

Elijah.—Draw near, all ye people: come to me!

Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel! this day let it be known that Thou art God; and I am Thy servant! O show to all this people that I have done these things according to Thy word! O hear me, Lord, and answer me! and show this people that Thou art Lord God; and let their their hearts again be turned!

Recitative.

Elijah.—O Thou, who makest Thine angels spirits;—Thou, whose ministers are flaming fires, let them now descend!

Chorus.

The People.—The fire descends from heaven; the flames consume his offering!

Before Him upon your faces fall! The Lord is God: O Israel hear! Our God is one Lord: and we will have no other gods before the Lord!

Recitative.

Elijah.—Take all the prophets of Baal; and let not one of them escape you: bring them down to Kishon's brook, and there let them be slain.

Chorus.

The People.—Take all the prophets of Baal; and let not one of them escape us; bring all, and slay them!

Aria.

Woe unto them who forsake Him! destruction shall fall upon them, for they have transgressed against Him. Though they are by Him redeemed, yet they have spoken falsely against Him.

Recitative and Chorus.

Obadiah.—O man of God, help thy people! Among the Idols of the Gentiles, are there any that can command the rain, or cause the heavens to give their showers? The Lord our God alone can do these things.

Elijah.—O Lord, thou hast overthrown thine enemies and destroyed them. Look down on us from heaven, O Lord; regard the distress of Thy people; open the heavens and send us relief: help, help Thy servant now, O God!

The People.—Open the heavens and send us relief: help, help Thy servant now, O God!

Elijah.—Go up now, child, and look toward the sea. Hath my prayer been heard by the Lord?

The Youth.—There is nothing. The heavens are as brass above me.

Elijah.—When the heavens are closed up because they have sinned against Thee, yet if they pray and confess Thy name, and turn from their sin when Thou dost afflict them; then hear from heaven, and forgive the sin! Help! send Thy servant help, O God!

The People.—Then hear from heaven, and forgive the sin! Help! send Thy servant help, O Lord!

Elijah.—Go up again, and still look toward the sea.

The Youth.—There is nothing. The earth is as iron under me!

Elijah.—Hearest thou no sound of rain?—seest thou nothing arise from the deep?

The Youth.—No; there is nothing.

Elijah.—Have respect to the prayer of Thy servant, O Lord, my God! Unto Thee will I cry, Lord, my rock; be not silent to me; and Thy great mercies remember, Lord!

The Youth.—Behold, a little cloud ariseth now from the waters; it is like a man's hand! The heavens are black with clouds and with wind: the storm rusheth louder and louder!

The People.—Thanks be to God, for all His mercies!

Elijah.—Thanks be to God, for He is gracious, and His mercy endureth for evermore!

Chorus.

Thanks be to God! He laveth the thirsty land! The waters gather; they rush along; they are lifting their voices!

The stormy billows are high; their fury is mighty. But the Lord is above them, and Almighty!

INTERMISSION

PART II

Aria.

Hear ye, Israel; hear what the Lord speaketh:—"Oh, hadst thou heeded my commandments!"

Who hath believed our report; to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?

Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, and His Holy One, to him oppressed by Tyrants: thus saith the Lord:—"I am He that comforteth; be not afraid for I am thy God, I will strengthen thee. Say, who art thou, that thou art afraid of a man that shall die; and forgettest the Lord thy Maker, who hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the earth's foundations? Be not afraid, for I, thy God will strengthen thee."

Chorus.

Be not afraid, saith God the Lord. Be not afraid! thy help is near. God, the Lord thy God, saith unto thee, "Be not afraid!"

The Queen.—Hath he not prophesied also against the King of Israel?

Chorus.—We heard it with our ears.

Though thousands languish and fall beside thee, and tens of thousands around thee perish, yet still it shall not come nigh thee.

Recitative and Chorus.

Elijah.—The Lord hath exalted thee from among the people: and o'er his people Israel hath

made thee King. But thou. Ahab, hast done evil to provoke him to anger above all that were before thee: as if it had been a light thing for thee to walk in the sins of Jeroboam. Thou hast made a grove and an altar to Baal, and serv'd him and worshipp'd him. Thou hast killled the righteous, and also taken possession.

And the Lord shall smite all Israel, as a reed is shaken in the water; and He shall give Israel up, and thou shalt know He is the Lord.

The Queen.—Have ye not heard he hath prophesied against all Israel?

Chorus.—We heard it with our ears.

The Queen.—And why hath he spoken in the name of the Lord? Doth Ahab govern the kingdom of Israel while Elijah's power is greater than the king's?

The gods do so to me, and more; if, by to-morrow about this time, I make not his life as the life of one of them whom he hath sacrificed at the brook of Kishon!

Chorus.—He shall perish!

The Queen.—Hath he not destroyed Baal's prophets?

Chorus.—He shall perish!

The Queen.—Yea, by sword he destroyed them all!

Chorus.—He destroyed them all!

The Queen.—He also closed the heavens!

Chorus.—He also closed the heavens!

The Queen.—And called down a famine upon the land.

Chorus.—And called down a famine upon the land.

The Queen.—So go ye forth and seize Elijah, for he is worthy to die; slaughter him! do unto him as he hath done!

Chorus.

Woe to him, he shall perish; he closed the heavens! And why hath he spoken in the name of the Lord? Let the guilty prophet perish! He hath spoken falsely against our land and us, as we have heard with our ears. So go ye forth; seize on him! He shall die!

Recitative.

Obadiah.—Man of God, now let my words be precious in thy sight. Thus saith Jezebel; "Elijah is worthy to die." So the mighty gather against thee, and they have prepared a net for thy steps; that they may seize thee, that they may slay thee. Arise, then, and hasten for thy life; to the wilderness journey. The Lord thy God doth go with thee: He will not fail thee, He will not forsake thee, He will not forsake thee. Now begone, and bless me also.

Elijah.—Though stricken, they have not grieved! Tarry here, my servant: the Lord be with thee. I journey hence to the wilderness.

Aria.

Elijah.—It is enough, O Lord; now take away my life, for I am not better than my fathers! I desire to live no longer; now let me die, for my days are but vanity!

I have been very jealous for the Lord God of Hosts! for the children of Israel have broken Thy covenant, and thrown down Thine altars, and slain Thy prophets with the sword: and I, even I, only am left; and they seek my life to take it away.

Tenor Recitative.

See, now he sleepeth beneath a juniper tree in the wilderness: and there the angels of the Lord encamp round about all them that fear Him.

Trio.

Angels.—Lift thine eyes to the mountains, whence cometh help. Thy help cometh from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth. He hath said, thy foot shall not be moved: thy Keeper will never slumber.

Chorus.

Angels.—He, watching over Israel, slumbers not, nor sleeps. Shouldst thou, walking in grief, languish. He will quicken thee.

Recitative.

An Angel.—Arise, Elijah, for thou hast a long journey before thee. Forty days and forty nights shalt thou go; to Horeb, the mount of God.

Elijah.—O Lord, I have laboured in vain; yea, I have spent my strength for naught!

O that Thou wouldst rend the heavens, that Thou wouldst come down; that the mountains would flow down at Thy presence, to make Thy name known to Thine adversaries, through the wonders of Thy works!

O Lord, why hast Thou made them to err from Thy ways, and hardened their hearts that they do not fear Thee? O that I now might die!

Aria.

O rest in the Lord; wait patiently for Him, and He shall give thee thy heart's desires. Commit thy way unto Him, and trust in Him, and fret not thyself because of evil doers.

Recitative.

Elijah.—Night falleth round me, O Lord! Be Thou not far from me! hide not Thy face, O Lord, from me; my soul is thirsting for Thee, as a thirsty land.

An Angel.—Arise, now! get thee without, stand on the mount before the Lord; for there His glory will appear and shine on thee! Thy face must be veiled, for He draweth near.

Chorus.

Behold! God the Lord passed by! And a mighty wind rent the mountains around, brake in pieces the rocks, brake them before the Lord: but yet the Lord was not in the tempest.

Behold! God the Lord passed by! And the sea was upheaved, and the earth was shaken: but yet the Lord was not in the earthquake.

And after the earthquake there came a fire: but yet the Lord was not in the fire.

And after the fire there came a still small voice; and in that still voice, onward came the Lord.

Recitative.

Elijah.—I go on my way in the strength of the Lord. For Thou art my Lord; and I will suffer for Thy sake. My heart is therefore glad, my glory rejoiceth, and my flesh shall also rest in hope.

Aria.

Elijah.—For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but Thy kindness shall not depart from me, neither shall the covenant of Thy peace be removed.

Chorus.

Then did Elijah the prophet break forth like a fire; his words appeared like burning torches. Mighty kings by him were overthrown. He stood on the mount of Sinai, and heard the judgments of the future; and in Horeb, its vengeance.

And when the Lord would take him away to heaven, lo! there came a fiery chariot, with fiery horses; and he went by a whirlwind to heaven.

Aria.

Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in their heavenly Father's realm. Joy on their head shall be foreverlasting, and all sorrow and mourning shall flee away forever.

Chorus.

And then shall your light break forth as the light of morning breaketh; and your health shall speedily spring forth then; and the glory of the Lord ever shall reward you.

Lord, our Creator, how excellent Thy name is in all the nations! Thou fillest heaven with Thy glory. Amen!

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Presented to Charles Francis Chickering
by Emperor Napoleon III, Paris 1867

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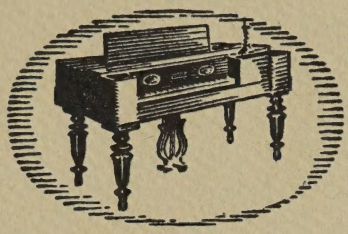

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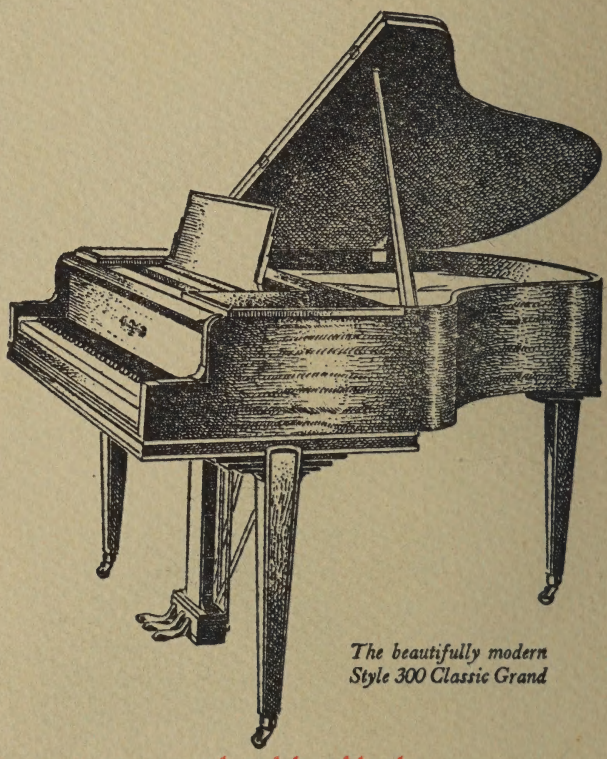

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